

Miltimore House
1301 Chelton Way
Pasadena
Los Angeles County
California

HABS No. CA-1988

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CAL,
19-PASA,
7-

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
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Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MILTIMORE HOUSE

HABS No. CA-1988

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CAL,
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Location: 1301 Chelton Way
Pasadena, Los Angeles County, California

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Holt

Present Use: Residence

Significance: This small residence is an early example of the work of architect Irving John Gill. Though economically styled and built, the house achieves a degree of spaciousness with its large living room, and outdoor "green rooms" (terraces covered with pergolas and vines).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1911
2. Architect: Irving John Gill
3. Original and subsequent owners:

1911 Mrs. Paul Miltimore

1940 John Shaw

1952 Benjamin Holt

4. Builder: Unknown
5. Original plans and construction:

Original drawings are at the Art Galleries, University of California, Santa Barbara. (These drawings were previously kept by Louis Gill, FAIA, San Diego, nephew of Irving Gill; prints were made for use in Five California Architects by Esther McCoy (New York, 1960). The present owners of the house have a blueprint set of the drawings).

The plan is an approximate square with two one-room projections at northeast and northwest (not shown on the original plan, but constructed at the same time). The building is a two-story, four-bedroom house of wood framing with concrete stucco walls; the walls are sheer, without ornament or projections. The entrance to the house is through a pergola parallel with the facade and extending to the driveway. Opposite this (west facade) is a roofed terrace, shown in the original plan as covered by a trellis; the roof lines up with the south wall of the house and the projecting room at the north west. An early photo shows the west terrace covered by trellising.

6. Alterations: Only minor alterations have been made; they include the removal of the original solar heating system and the roofing of the west terrace. A religious shrine was removed from the west wall of the south bedroom. In 1958, architect Irving Rector of Los Angeles remodelled the kitchen, removed the wall between the kitchen and pantry, and modernized the bathrooms.

Prepared by: Esther McCoy
Summer 1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

GENERAL STATEMENT

Architectural interest and merit:

This small residence, designed by Irving John Gill and begun in 1911, exhibits those qualities evident in all his later work -- the chaste simplicity of white rectangular masses and the lack of ornament. Notable in this building are what he termed his "green rooms" (pergola structures covered with vines) which were used as outdoor living areas. While striving for economy, Gill was able to provide his client with a luxuriously spacious living room and master bedroom.

Condition of fabric:

The house is in excellent physical condition.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR

Number of stories: 2 plus basement

Over-all dimensions: 44'-4" from North to South; 38'-4" from East to West; 21'-4" from finished grade to top of parapet.

Layout-shape: The house was originally designed as a simple rectangular mass (almost a square). (Information derived from original drawings dated 7/11/11.) Two one-room projections are included at the NE corner of the East facade and at the NW corner of the West facade. There is no evidence to indicate that they were added later.

Foundations: 8" poured concrete walls are used in the basement having a 1'-2" by 10" deep footing. The walls are left unfinished in the basement. Concrete footings are employed for the terraces.

Wall Construction: The walls are of 7" thick frame construction with a white plaster finish applied to the exterior surface.

Structural system, framing:

The frame walls support 2" x 10" joists for the first and second floor construction and 2" x 8" joists for the roof. 4" x 6" Oregon pine beams are employed for the pergolas, being supported by 8" and 10" beams carried on 21" bottom diameter (17½" top) plastered concrete columns and by square pilasters, of the same materials, at the building.

Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.:

"Green rooms" (trellis covered terraces) along the E and W sides of the house provide the transition from the driveway to the house proper. These structures are used as outdoor living areas and extend S over the driveway. The surface of the terraces is of 12" square tile set in concrete and are situated 5" below the residence floor level.

A small sleeping balcony was located in the center of the W facade at the second floor level. It was supported by the structure of the pergolas below, and was enclosed by canvass and screen on a pipe frame. This balcony was removed (date unknown) and replaced with a wooden deck extending across almost two-thirds of the facade from the SW corner.

A small roof terrace is situated over the SE room projection. While access is possible it is probably not intended as a usable surface as it has a composition roof and a skylight projecting through it.

Chimneys:

A brick chimney with a plastered surface ($1'-6\frac{1}{4}"$ N to S; $3'-4\frac{1}{2}"$ E to W) rised directly from the roof without interruption. There is no relief to the surface. The mass is situated $15'-10\frac{1}{2}"$ back from the E surface of the building and $24'-2"$ from the N surface.

Openings - doorways and doors:

The main entry to the house is located just north of center on the E facade. The door is $3'-4"$ by $7'-0"$ with a square window having turned balusters inset in the panel. A hinged screen panel backs up the window. The service entry is located at the east side of the N facade. Its door (wood) is a $2'-8"$ x $7'-0"$ stock screen door with one large screen panel over two horizontal solid panels. Originally three sets of french windows were indicated to open out onto the W terrace (the set to the north now opens into a small room projection located at that corner). Each set is composed of two $2'-2"$ x $7'-0"$ doors with $18"$ x $66"$ glass panels.

The door opening onto the second floor W deck is $2'-8"$ x $6'-4"$ with a $16"$ x $54"$ glass and screen panel. A french window composition opens onto the roof of the NE room projection.

- windows:

All windows are of wood sash set in wood frame. Window compositions utilize either stationary sash flanked by casements and topped by transoms (used on the first floor E and S), casements topped by transoms (second floor E, W, S), or casements alone (used in the service rooms and seen on the second floor N and W elevations). Casement windows are situated in the basement, opening onto the areaway on the north side of the building. The exterior trim is painted green.

Roof - shape, covering:

The building has a flat composition roof with a slight pitch of $\frac{1}{4}"$ /ft. A parapet encompasses the roof, varying in height from $18"$ to $30"$. One skylight is located near the center of the roof (over the stairhall) and another over the oratory of the master bedroom in the SW corner of the building (a third skylight is situated on the roof of the NE room projection). The original drawings show a 120 gallon storage tank and a solar heater on the roof. These are no longer present (date of removal, if installed, is unknown). The only other object on the roof is the access scuttle. $6"$ x $6"$ x $6"$ gutter boxes are found in the SE and NE corners of the main roof and the NE corner of the room projection at that corner of the house. $3"$ x $4"$ Galvanized Iron Down Spout (painted white) are located under the gutter boxes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF INTERIOR

Plans (by floors):

Basement: a 24'-7" x 22'-7" furnace room is located in the NE corner of the plan. To the south, is located a room which was formerly an unexcavated area measuring 17'-9" x 37'-0". Another unexcavated area measuring 24'-8" x 13'-9" is situated in the NW corner.

First Floor: The house is entered at about the center of the E facade; the entry hall measures 8'-11" x 12'-0". To the left of this hall is located the spacious living room (18'-0" x 37'-2") which consumes the entire south side of the building. The stairhall is located at the center of the house, with access through it and the living room to the 14'-0" x 24'-10" dining room in the NW corner. The pantry, kitchen and screen porch finish out the north side of the plan. A small studio projection is found off the west wall of the dining room at the north end, and another projection is found off the east side of the building at the north end. These projections appear to be a part of the original construction though they are not a part of the initial design.

Second Floor: The link between the first and second floors is via the central stairhall. Chamber #1 fills the entire south side of the house and corresponds in size and location to the living room below. This room has a small oratory centered on its west wall (flanked by two walk-in closets). Chamber #2 is at the center of the east wall; #3 is in the NE corner; #4 is in the NW corner. Bathroom #1 is centered on the west wall and services chamber #1 only (it also provides the only access to the deck atop the west pergola). Bathroom #2 is centered on the north wall and has access from the central hall.

Stairways:

The main stairway is the central stair to the second floor. It is U-shaped and ascends in a clockwise direction filling a $\frac{1}{2}$ octagonal space in plan. Oak steps are used and the risers (15 in number) are 7 $\frac{1}{3}$ "; the treads are 11". Some winders are included in the run. The stairs to the basement are located in the screen porch at the NE corner. There are 12 risers of 8 $\frac{1}{3}$ " with 10" treads. 4" risers are located at the entrance to each bathroom and closet.

Flooring: 1" x 2" Oak T&G, first and second floor; basement floors are cement.

Walls: The 4" partitions are of 1" boards built up with lath and plaster. They are trimmed with a plain Oregon pine border which is flush with the plaster finish.

Ceilings: The ceilings are of plaster.

Doorways and doors:

All doors are 7'-0" high flush panel doors or are french windows as described for the exterior. The doors to all closets are elevated 4" off the floor and these doors are subsequently 6'-8" high.

Trim:

Flat 3/4" Oregon pine boards are used throughout the house as trim. They are used flat on the walls at the juncture of the walls, the walls and the ceiling, and the walls and the floor. The trim surface is flush with the plaster surface. These boards tend to make each wall a single composition set within its own frame. The same material is used to frame all the openings.

Tile is used around the fireplace openings and for the hearths.

Cabinets:

Book cases are built in at the western end of the living room. They begin on the south wall at the west side of the window and continue around the room in a clockwise direction to the french windows on the west wall, resuming again on the other side to the dining room doors on the north side. They stand 4'-6" high. There is a small wood storage box built into the wall to the left of the fireplace on the north living room wall.

There is a built-in cupboard and sideboard on the east wall of the dining room.

The kitchen cabinets date from the 1960 remodelling.

Hardware:

The hardware is standard. Butt hinges, handles, and latches are standard items. There is a brass door knocker on the front door.

Lighting fixtures:

Electric lighting fixtures are used, some of the plain ceiling fixtures being original. They have a simple glass shield set against the ceiling.

Plumbing fixtures:

The original plumbing fixtures are in place except in the kitchen which was remodelled in 1960. The second floor bathrooms have standard items such as W.C., lav., and the tubs are enclosed in magnesite composition. Bathroom #1 also has a shower. The small toilet room in the NE room projection has a W.C., lav., and tub. On the exterior of the house are located the waste and soil stacks - 2" waste, 4" soil on the north wall; 4" soil on the west wall.

Heating: : Central hot air heating system with ducts located near the center of the building. One is situated in the west exterior wall, another in the north exterior wall.

Fireplaces are located on the north walls of the living room and chamber #1. There is an ash pit in the basement below.

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Orientation (by compass reading) and general setting:

The house is essentially a rectangular mass with the longest dimension from N to S (44'-4"). The shortest dimension is therefore E to W (38'-4"). With the two room projections to the east and west, the north wall dimension is increased to 64'-4". The pergolas ("Green rooms") are situated along the east and west sides, the east being the front of the house. The building is set on lot #4 which measures 91' (N to S) x 240' (E to W). It is situated 80'-0" back from the east property line, (to the front edge of the terrace), 5'-0" from the north property line, and 41'-8" from the south property line. The lot is covered extensively with trees and other plantings. Shelton Way is located at the eastern end of the lot.

Outbuildings:

The garage was also designed by Gill at the same time as the house. It is situated at the SW corner of the site. The plan of this simple structure provides for storage of two automobiles with a store room to the north. Entrance to the garage is from the east via an asphalt driveway. The building is of frame construction with a stucco covering. The window and door details correspond to those of the house.

Landscaping:

The site is heavily planted although no strong order is apparent except that an effort has been made to establish an enclosure of the site through the use of dense growth on the perimeter. Oak trees, cedars, magnolias, and fruit trees are used. Wisteria grows on the pergolas. A split redwood fence encloses the north side of the lot.

Driveways:

The driveway leads from the street to the east, along the south side of the house (through the last bay of the pergola), and directly to the garage at the rear of the site.

Sidewalk:

The sidewalk leads from the street and is situated on the north side of the house.

12" square stepping stones lead from the driveway, through the rear pergola, to the terrace and around the rear of the house.

A sidewalk leads from the driveway, through the front pergola, to the terrace.

Miscellaneous:

The original plans, dated 7/11/11, do not coincide with the house as it stands (and possibly as it was originally built). In addition to minor discrepancies in the placement of openings, there is the presence of two one room projections (one story high) on the north end of the east and west facades, and the extension of the pergolas by three bays. All this work appears to be a part of the original construction as there are no apparent joining marks, the details correspond, and they do not appear to be mere insertions to the original

scheme.

The kitchen was remodelled in 1960, at which time the windows on the first floor north facade were changed. The present windows retain the simplicity of the earlier work although they are of steel frame. The fixed glass is flanked by casements.

The city of South Pasadena has no records for the building prior to 1940.

Prepared by: Robert C. Giebner, Project Supervisor, HABS-Southern
California Project II.
Date of visit: July 8, 1969.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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- E. McCoy, Five California Architects, Reinhold, New York, 1960
- E. McCoy, "Un Riformatore in California," L'Architettura, Rome, Dec. 1959, Jan, 1960, Feb. 1960.
- E. McCoy, "Irving Cill," Los Angeles Times Home Magazine, Nov. 21, 1955
- Gebhard-Winter, A Guide to the Architecture of Southern California, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, 1965